

HIGH-RISE MYSTERY

SHARNA JACKSON



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ENGLAND**

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To Joseph
Freddy I Yore

HIGH-RISE MYSTERY

Screen grab of Silvertöe's blueprint

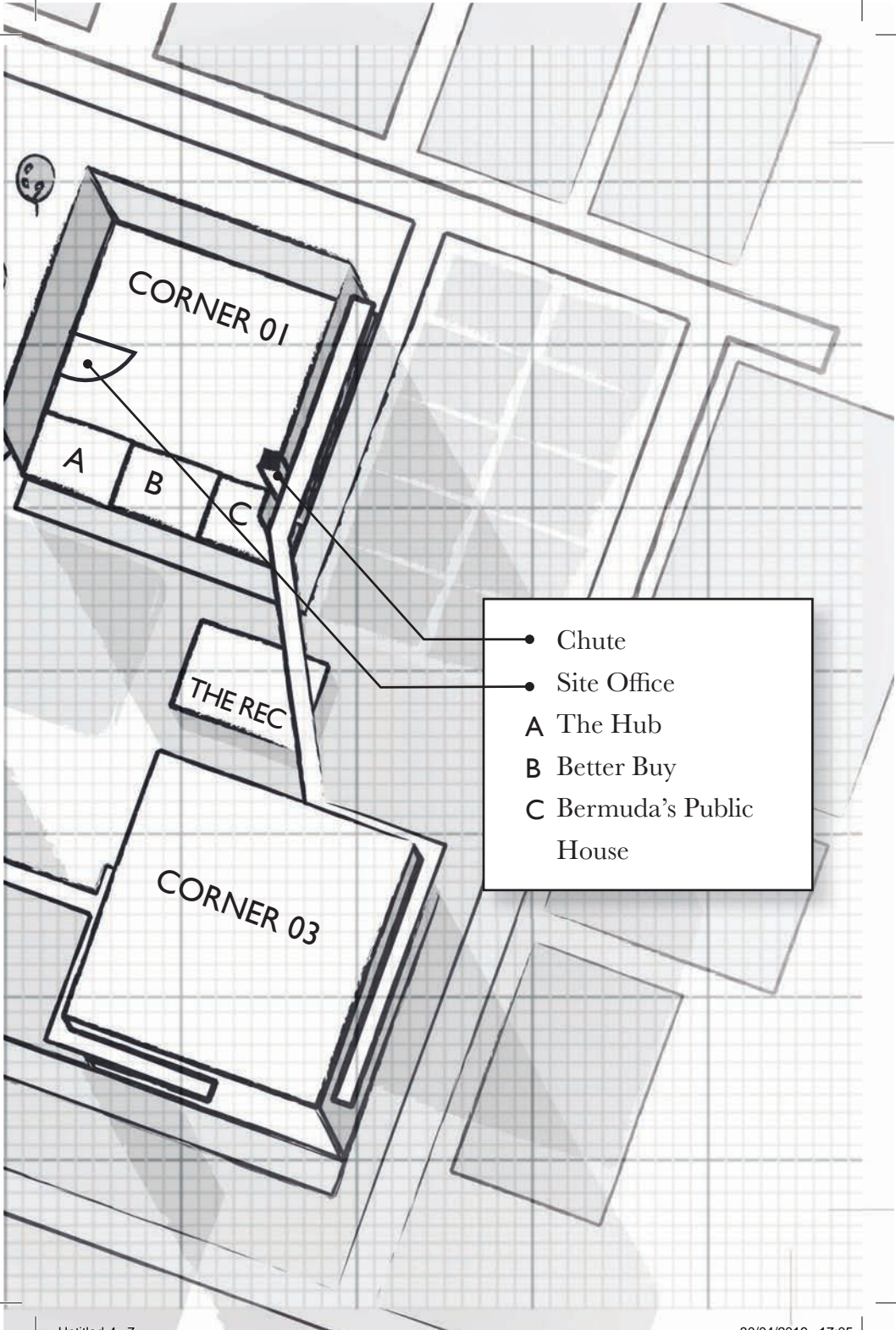
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Source: Council website

CORNER 02



- Chute
- Site Office
- A The Hub
- B Better Buy
- C Bermuda's Public House

I

If you think finding a body is a fun adventure, you're 33% right.

Hugo Knightley-Webb, 45. Antiques dealer and occasional art teacher. Curly white hair. Straight-up dead.

This was a fact. One I could confirm personally because we – Norva and I – just found his body. 14:27 on July 23rd. The hottest day of the year so far. Thirty-five degrees, and rising.

We knew we'd find him. It wasn't coincidence or happenstance. No. We knew. But prior knowledge didn't make the discovery any less shocking or painful.

Or smelly.

We located the body using a system I call my Triangle of Truth. Naturally, it has three angles:

- Facts
- Evidence
- Deduction

That's just how I work. Me: Anika 'Nik' Alexander, 11. Science-led with a shaved head.

Norva Alexander, 13. My sister. Long braids, short temper. My partner in (solving) crime. She has her own system. She feels things in her:

- Stomach
- Bones
- Waters

Whatever waters are. I try not to think about Norva's liquids too much.

That's an apt summation of our collaboration, actually. Norva shouts theories and says seemingly stupid stuff. I then organise those words, and think about them critically. This is, according to Norva, teamwork. According to her, she's the Gut and I'm the Nut. I should be offended, but I'm not. I'm used to it.

To be fair to Norva, we both strongly suspected something was wrong through our noses. It smelled wrong on The Tri since Saturday. Dead wrong.

The Tri is, apparently, a very special estate. It doesn't feel like it to many of us, though. We made models of it in Art Club once. Straws and papier-mâché. Glue and gravel. Hugo said The Tri was a 'seminal example of Brutalism', but Hugo used to say a lot of random things.

He won't be saying so much now, unfortunately. Ugh, this situation is terrible. I promised myself I wouldn't cry. Again. I'll hold it together.

Yes, The Tri.

Norva says, 'These ends are a scorching hotbed for stories.'

She's not wrong. We've long-solved 'The Graffiti Games', 'Where the Ball At?' and 'The Cat Farm Chronicles'.

But this is different. Bigger. Scarier. Dangerous. The stakes are so much higher.

We'll start a real detective agency one day. A local business, for local people. Give something back to the estate. Our tagline would be: 'If something's going down at The Tri, we know what's up!'

Norva shouted 'Branding!' at the end of that sentence, and flicked her hair in my eyes.

So, that's why we – I – keep files. The Tri-Files. The files are a top-secret folder that includes but is not limited to:

- Logs
- Checklists
- Tables
- Photographs
- Screen grabs
- Recordings – both audio and video

Which we use to:

- Track movements
- Register events
- Keep logs
- Follow leads
- Find culprits
- Serve justice

I store the documents online so we can access and update them on our phones – and on our almost obsolete computer.

Where we go, they go. If we know, there are notes. The files – in this format and configuration – have been active for eleven months.

I won't ever stop updating them. Not now there is a real case, with a very real body. A body that belonged to someone I cared about.

Not now they're actually important. Not now
we need to find who did this to Hugo.
And why.